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*The SACRAMENT  
of LOVE.*

*FORBES E. WINSLOW.*







QUIET THOUGHTS  
ON THE  
SACRAMENT OF LOVE.  
AN EIRENICON

BY  
FORBES E. WINSLOW, M.A.,  
VICAR OF EPPING.



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QUIET THOUGHTS  
ON  
THE SACRAMENT OF LOVE.

---

Peace on Earth.

---

AMONG our sweet anticipations of the joys of Heaven, the expectation of attaining at last to perfect rest occupies no mean rank.

We are so harassed and distressed in our present state of existence, we are so tossed about on life's troubled sea, that we long to reach a place where we can obtain a sure footing, where our toils will be over, our labours come to an end, and our temptations and difficulties cease. While the majority of our fellow men are content to abide the long-deferred coming of this blessed day of rest, content to endure the stormy winds and troubled seas, until they reach the safe

anchorage of "the haven where they would be;" there are others of us who long to obtain rest even in this life. We wish to live "at Zion in Jerusalem;" while members of the Church on earth, to be partakers of the joys of the Church in Heaven.

And surely such a desire is not presumptuous; the life we live here should not be alien to the life we shall live hereafter. Is not this world a preparation for another? Are we not sent here to be in a state of probation, to be trained and disciplined for our glorious destiny in the Father's kingdom? Should we not then cultivate those virtues, and aim at the acquisition of those spiritual gifts which will constitute so great a part of our happiness in another world?

A Christian's life should be one of perfect serenity; no fear or distrust should ever cloud over his perfect reliance upon the love of God. Deep down in his heart should spring that ever-flowing fountain of joy

which nothing can take away ; a boundless charity which thinketh no evil should be the guiding principle of his actions.

Between the old life and the new life, the life of condemnation and the life of justification, stands the Cross of Jesus, assuring him of God's forgiveness of the past, pointing to him a place of refuge for the present, and offering him a glorious hope for the future. Yes, here it is the troubled soul finds peace.

And if this be true as regards the spiritual life, so is it especially in matters of faith ; we believe that perfect peace and security can be assured to us ; we believe that we are justified in resting our souls upon those revelations of truth, which God has given in His Church and His written Word. We can, at best, see only dimly and faintly through a glass darkly, but yet sufficient is revealed "to afford an anchor for the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

I write as one weary of the continual

strife which agitates "the religious world;" as one sick at heart of the discord and disunion which pervade the Universal Church. As some argue, our modern religious controversies may be indications of life, and so to be preferred to the utter stagnation of indifference, as a running stream is preferable to standing water. Nevertheless, I can scarcely breathe in our perturbed murky atmosphere, and long to soar up into the region of calm, quiet, peaceful thought, leaving the din and tumult of the contentious world far, far beneath.

There are some ardent spirits who revel in a field of battle, they need the excitement, the stimulus of a conflict; the pomp and panoply of war, the sound of martial music, the rattle of the drum, the thunder of the cannon, the maddening impetuosity of the headlong charge, the hand to hand fight for life or death, have to them an inexpressible charm, and existence without these stimulants to action would be intolerable.

Others there are who delight in the quietude and stillness of peace. Beneath the pomp and glory of war they see revealed only too clearly the arrogance and selfishness of human pride; after the excitement of the fight, they survey with tearful eyes the inevitable consequence, the battle-field strewn with the dying and the dead; their thoughts wander away from the scene of victory, to the happy homes made desolate, to the poor bereaved widows and the fatherless children. Their one prayer, their one longing is for an end to be put to the unhappy war which is carrying destruction so far and wide.

And so in spiritual things we have our eager combatants, our controversialists, who delight in making a raid into an enemy's country; they care not what harsh suspicions they engender, they heed not the wreck they make of their brother's happiness, they think not of the ruin and desolation they bring into the quiet, peaceful spot where Christian love heretofore had reigned supreme. They


are determined at all costs to force their own views of truth upon their opponents; they

“Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war.”

Onward they go in their impetuous rush, slashing wildly to right and to left, until the scene of conflict is more like a hell upon earth than anything else.

How different all this is to the mind and spirit of Christ. Love surely should be the motive power of our religion. “Speak the truth, teach it in season and out of season,” is the command laid upon us; but can we not acquit ourselves of our charge without ruthless violence, without harshness and unkindness one to the other? Bitterness, malice, and evil speaking have been enlisted on the side of religion, and have but intensified the ills they were meant to heal; let us go back to the good old paths, and try what gentleness, forbearance, brotherly kindness and loving sympathy will do.

In this book I shall endeavour to put forth certain quiet thoughts respecting that marvellous Sacrament of Love, which has been selected as a battle-ground for all the opposing religious bodies of Christendom. I do not presume to challenge attention as a profound theologian, as a teacher of Israel, or even as one wielding "the pen of a ready writer." My sole wish is as a humble parish priest to put in a plea for peace, to raise up my feeble protest against the unhallowed intrusion of worldly clamour and excited party feeling into the sacred Presence chamber of our Lord, the wondrous Sacrament of His Love.





### The Golden Link.

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
It is the fashion of our times to tabulate and classify every variety of religious thought and opinion. Our modern theologians are not content, unless every man carries about with him a label setting forth the particular genus and species in the world religious to which he appertains. By this means certain definiteness is assuredly obtained; but, on the other hand, narrow distinctions are magnified, and insurmountable barriers are raised up on every side. Men finding themselves, very often even against their will, divided into small cliques and clans, unconsciously fall back upon the feeling of clanship; and instead of aiming at broad, liberal, generous views, become intolerant partisans of some small, petty

phase of religious thought, giving "up to party what was meant for mankind." Against this narrowing and circumscribing of our common Christianity I do most vehemently protest. Instead of magnifying our differences, let us seek out some common ground of union. Instead of dwelling with spiteful delight upon the errors and weaknesses and failings of those who differ from us, let us rejoice in bringing into prominence their virtue, good deeds, and noble actions. Every heresy has a foundation of truth; let us dig down to that foundation, and delight in finding that which is common to us all.

We have wondered sometimes why it is that God allows His Church to be so split up into innumerable fragments; we have mourned over the loss of strength and power which our miserable divisions entail. But our confidence in the overruling providence of God has never failed. We see how He has brought light out of darkness; how each great portion of the Church, nay, we



lay our arms on the  
together as children of  
This region of peace I  
in communion. Surely we  
strong bond of union  
the sacrament of our Re-  
does not this solemn rite,  
in the same night He  
in to bid us bring to an  
reconciliation and bitterness. Do  
Memorials of His Cross and  
our harsh thoughts and un-  
one of the other.  
presence of this great Christian  
who acknowledge one Faith,  
Baptism, one God and Father  
are members of the same one  
same Church, should draw near  
in the unity of Divine love.  
as indeed a master-stroke of  
unity, to divert that which was  
the language of love to one  
for angry passion



may go farther and say each infinitesimal sect brings into prominence some precious truth which otherwise would have been obscured. Each small community of Christians, originating it may be in the selfwill of an independent leader, has its work to do in the Divine economy. And while we are uttering lamentations over the scattered fragments of the once-united Church, God is carrying out His grand purposes by those very means which we deprecate; out of a chaos of contradictions, out of a confused mass of differing creeds and opinions, He is gradually forming and fashioning the Church of the Future, the true Catholic Church, where mere outward uniformity will give place to the real unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Although we are so hopeful, yet we may surely anticipate that blessed unity for which we long and pray. We may even now, separated as we are from one another, seek out a neutral ground, a place where we soldiers of hostile armies may for awhile

forget our animosity, lay our arms on the ground, and associate together as children of one common Father. This region of peace I find at the Holy Communion. Surely we Christians can find a strong bond of union in that which is the sacrament of our Redeemer's love. Does not this solemn rite, instituted by Jesus in the same night He was betrayed, seem to bid us bring to an end all our contention and bitterness. Do not the silent memorials of His Cross and Passion rebuke our harsh thoughts and unkind judgments, one of the other.

In the presence of this great Christian Mystery, we who acknowledge one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who are members of the same one Body, the self-same Church, should draw near to each other in the unity of Divine love.

Ah! it was indeed a master-stroke of Satanic ingenuity, to divert that which was to be the pledge and gage of love to one another, into an occasion for angry passion and strife.

As I kneel before the altar with my mind full of the associations which marked the first institution of this Holy Sacrament, with my thoughts concentrated on Him Whom I am seeking, with my soul longing to rid itself of its burden, its intolerable weight of shortcomings and sinfulness, why should I disquiet myself with speculations as to the faith of my fellow-worshippers? Sufficient surely for each man is his own personal faith. What matters it to me if we each are looking at this pledge of Christ's love in a different manner? That which assures me of His Presence, may be to another but a memorial of His Death and Passion; to another a simple act of obedience to the Lord's command. As in natural things, so in spiritual realities, we find, whatsoever we bring with us, we receive in proportion to our faith. We come seeking an especial blessing, perhaps from dimness of vision, or want of knowledge, not always the highest blessing; our Father gives to us that which we expect.

Provided there is no irreverence or carelessness (which are simply inexcusable) in the administration or reception of this Holy Sacrament, I see not what we gain by too closely scrutinising our neighbour's faith. His belief is a matter between himself and his God. Can we not, although belonging to different schools of thought, strive as fellow Christians to meet together more often at "God's Board"? Can we not forget our common differences in our common love, and rest upon the One Foundation, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, "the full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

We poor feeble creatures cling to one another's love; we cannot live alone; we must have sympathy and affection; we look for some object around which we in our utter isolation can entwine ourselves. Earthly love, however, is but the shadow of heavenly love. How sweet is the communion of saints; how full of comfort it is



to come across those with whom we can walk in the house of God as friends, to interchange our thoughts, to compare our experiences, to tell each other about the way the Lord has led us, to unfold the hidden yearnings and deepest feelings of the heart. Such opportunities of spiritual intercourse are, alas! rare, because we keep aloof one from the other; our Church and sect would straightway anathematise us, did we pass over the boundary line which marks us off as the elect of God, from our fellow men.

It is a question which is coming to the forefront, which earnest-minded men of every clime and Church are beginning to raise, Need these things be? Are we for ever to be controlled by foolish prejudice, and the oppression of tyranny and custom? Do we not all inhabit one earth? Have we not the same blessed influences at work amongst us in the kingdom of nature and of grace? Does not the same sun shine down upon us? Have we not the same common

Father? Have we not been purchased by the same precious Blood, and sealed by the same Holy Spirit? Do we not look forward to one common home, where there shall be one fold and one Shepherd?

It is true we look at things differently; our education, our training, our temperaments are all important factors to be considered in the formation of our opinions. In the ordinary matters of life we have to bear and forbear; existence would be unendurable, the whole fabric of society would be dissolved, did we not act towards one another in the spirit of toleration. Why can we not carry this principle into higher matters, and without making an unnecessary compromise of our own faith, deal tenderly with the faith of others? But I go further; I not only put in a plea for toleration, but I advocate love, earnest, genuine, fervent love one to the other.

Let us then meet together around the Altar or the Table of the Lord—call it what you will, it matters not—and partaking

of the pledges of that infinite love which has redeemed and saved us from the wrath to come, let us be animated by the spirit of Him who meets us there.

The angels looking down from Heaven upon the touching scene, upon the spiritual Bethlehem and mystical Calvary, upon the Saviour coming in humiliation once more to dwell amongst His people, pleading with them by the memorials of His wounded Body and outpoured Blood, shall chant once again the sweet song of the Nativity, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and goodwill towards men."

## The Communion of Saints.

---

“THEY whose course on earth is o’er,  
Think they of their brethren more ?  
They before the throne who bow,  
Feel they for their brethren now ?

Yea, the dead in Christ have still  
Part in all our joy and ill ;  
Keeping all our steps in view,  
Guiding them, it may be, too.

We by enemies distrest,  
They in Paradise at rest ;  
We the captives, they the freed—  
We and they are one indeed.

One in all we seek or shun ;  
One, because our Lord is One ;  
One in heart, and one in love :  
We below and they above.”

Do not these lines express the feelings of  
many who protest against the cold, heartless  
belief that between the living and dead

there is an insurmountable barrier, which shall not be removed until the Résurrection Day ?

As we turn mournfully away from the graveside of some beloved one, are we to increase our gloom and sorrow by the thought that we have bidden a long farewell to that loving spirit, whose sole delight was to minister to our wants, and to sustain us by its love ? Are we simply to live in the sad recollection of the happy past, and to regard our beloved friend as having no longer any lot or inheritance with us ? Ah, no ! a thousand times no !

We cannot follow the unimprisoned soul on its heavenward flight ; we cannot penetrate the darkness which veils it from our view ; but yet we know it loves on as of yore ; we feel assured its one thought is still of us, that it occupies itself in its distant home in interceding for our safety and salvation.

What is true of those who sleep in Jesus, *is true also* of the blessed inhabitants of the

realms of joy, the Angels and Archangels, the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places. They too take part in the grand service of intercession, they too have our dearest interests at heart.

Sometimes when I have been celebrating in the early morning, and my church has had but few worshippers assembled to meet their Lord, a sad feeling of loneliness has come over my soul, until I reached that triumphant outburst of praise: "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High." Ah! then I could say, "And yet I am not alone."

And then I have seen as it were the east wall of our church removed, and visions of a mighty host have been revealed to me. I have descried multitudes that no man can number, of spirits of just men made perfect,

and beyond them the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and Evangelists ; and, stretching farther into space, the Angels and Arch-angels and all the Company of Heaven ; and then, at an immeasurable distance, the Lamb of God, pleading, so earnestly, His perfect Sacrifice before His Father's throne. Yes, sweetest Jesus—

“Thou standest in the Holy Place,  
As now for guilty sinners slain ;  
The Blood of Sprinkling speaks and prays,  
All prevalent for helpless man ;  
Thy Blood is still our ransom found,  
And speaks salvation all around.”

Oh ! what power it gives to our weak, feeble, lonely prayers, when we realise how we are but units in a mighty host, unceasingly engaged in intercession and worship and adoration. The Church on earth and the Church in Heaven, or in Paradise, unite together in this blessed Sacrament of Love.

We are solitary and lonesome for the most part in our acts of religious worship.

We are so wrapt up in self, so isolated by our foolish reticence, so sensitive of observation, that an air of coldness and languor characterises our assembling together in God's house. But what a change would come over us, could we fully enter into the thought of the uninterrupted communion and fellowship which the Church militant enjoys with the Church triumphant! What fervour, zeal, and warmth would mark all our acts of devotion!

When a conquering army is passing on from one scene of victory to another, ever adding fresh laurels to those which it has already acquired, as its onward course is one grand triumphal procession, those whose ill fortune it is to be in the rear, who have never yet even drawn sword in the good cause, reap all the benefits and share all the honours so dearly won by their victorious comrades, and march to their quarters with the proud bearing of men who belong to an army of heroes. So we who are left behind in this world, who are far in the rear of the con-



quering army of Jesus Christ, feel that the honour, glory, and renown of the saints of old are our proud and undisputed possession. Far from the borders of Paradise, remote from the gates of Heaven, out of sight of the scenes of triumph, out of hearing of the redemption song, the thought of those who are on before, and the knowledge that we are part of one mighty host, in spirit and invigorate us for our daily conflicts with the powers of darkness.

By-and-by the veil shall be removed, our songs of earth shall blend with those of Heaven, the scattered fragments shall be gathered up ; and, one compact and glorious host, we shall pour through the pearly gates, and pass up the golden streets, to pay our tribute of praise and thanksgiving, before the throne of God and the Lamb.

### Until He Come.

---

THERE is a marvellous power in human eloquence, which is too much undervalued in our days. A man who can set on fire the imagination of his hearers, who can influence their passions and emotions, and can lead them whithersoever he will by his burning words, such a man is a true king of men.

He who enters the pulpit with a full sense of his divine mission and his awful responsibilities, who resolves

“ To preach, as never sure to preach again,  
And as a dying man, to dying men,”

establishes a most marvellous influence over his audience. He stands as an ambassador from another world, as one invested with

awful powers, with a message of reconciliation from an offended God to a rebellious earth. Now, with calm, quiet analysis, he exposes the faults, failings, and shortcomings of sinners; now, in accents of scorn, he displays man's utter inability to help himself; now, with anger and indignation, and a voice of thunder, he denounces God's wrath upon those who are impenitent and unbelieving; now, in accents of wondrous tenderness, with his voice like "a sigh breaking into a song," he unfolds the marvellous love of God in Christ, which offers salvation and pardon to the most guilty soul.

No wonder that when a man full of the sacred fire thus appeals to the hearts and consciences of his fellow men, the impression is great, genuine, and lasting.

And yet all the triumphs of human eloquence, tender, passionate, heart-rending though it be, cannot compare to those *which are achieved by the still and silent contemplation of the Sacrament of Love.*

There is but little excitement, little show, but the falling tear and the suppressed sob. Yet the work of the Holy Spirit is none the less real and effective.

When we come to the Blessed Sacrament, we come to gaze on it as a memory of Christ's death until His coming again. The broken bread and outpoured wine are to us touching tokens of His Body broken and His Blood outpoured for us upon the altar of the Cross.

The tenderest, most passionate human eloquence could not move us so much as the silent contemplation of the memorials of His Cross and Passion.

As I kneel in contemplation of this great Mystery, before me rise visions of the Man of Sorrows. I see His sad and suffering life; I track His weary wanderings to and fro after the souls of men. I mark with pain the contempt and scorn with which His offers of pardoning love are spurned. I follow Him to Gethsemane, and watch afar off His bitter agony. I view with indig-

nation His betrayal into the hands of sinful men, and the accumulated horrors of that fearful night. I go with faltering steps after Him down the Way of Sorrows; and standing by the Cross, blinded by my bitter tears of sorrow and reproach, I watch the spot where

“Jesus, my Love, is crucified.”

Ah, yes! it is good for me to be here. In the world, in the midst of my daily cares and anxieties, I forget my sins. Here I am brought face to face with them; here I can hate the sins that made Him mourn; here I can fathom the depths of my guilt; here I can estimate the fulness and richness of His love.

“Jesu, as though Thyself wert here,  
I draw in trembling sorrow near,  
And hanging o’er Thy form Divine,  
Kneel down to kiss those wounds of Thine.

“Oh, by those sacred hands and feet,  
For me so mangled, I entreat,  
My Jesu, turn me not away,  
*But let me here for ever stay!*”

And not only does this Sacrament lead my thoughts back into the past, and give me most precious comfort and consolation for my present needs and necessities, it also opens out a glorious vista of hope in the future. We commemorate the Lord's death until He comes again. With the sweet, sad memory of His Cross and Passion is also intermingled the thought of His Second Advent, of His Coming with power and great glory. I shall see Him no longer through a veil, no longer in a mystery; I shall need the intervention of no earthly elements ere I can perceive His presence. Sweet is it to approach Him as I do now, most blessed is the communion and fellowship which I enjoy with the Beloved; but how much more blessed to see with my own eyes the King in His beauty, shining out in His full majesty and glory, coming to take me to Himself, to call me to sit under His shadow with great delight, to partake of that fruit which is sweet to my taste, to have over me for evermore the Banner of Love. I see

then in the Eucharist the complete and finished work of Christ; I have a vivid perception of His humiliations, but likewise a definite assurance of His future glory. This Sacrament speaks to me of His degradation and shame, but also of His exaltation with great triumph into Heaven. Heaviness may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning; my sorrow and sadness for the sins that crucified Him, are absorbed in the rapture and delight with which I welcome the assurance of His second Coming.

### The All-sufficient Sacrifice.

---

FROM the very earliest days of man's history we read of sacrifices being offered up to God. Go where we will, to heathen nations whose unbroken traditions link them inseparably to the past, we shall find this selfsame idea that there must be a sacrifice, an offering to mediate between man and God, constituting the very foundation of their religion.

The Jewish Church under Divine instruction carried this law of sacrifice to its fullest development. It was perpetually offering up sacrifices of one kind or another. Man in those days could have had but a faint idea of to what all these offerings of the Mosaic law pointed ; but now he knows that they were types and foreshadowings of the all-sufficient Sacrifice offered on the Great



Day of Atonement for the sins of the whole world. We who live in these latter days have our Sacrifice. Let us be bold in pronouncing this fact. Let us not pass over or be silent about this blessed privilege, lest a misconstruction be put upon our words. As the centre of our spiritual life, we have that great Sacrifice of which all other offerings were but the very faintest foreshadowings.

When our dear Lord died upon the Cross, nineteen centuries ago, He then and there offered up a full and complete Sacrifice for the sins of the world. And we account it heresy to say that this Sacrifice can be in any shape or form repeated, or that it needs supplementing by anything of our own. But still we must not lose sight of the sacrificial aspect of the Sacrament of Love.

Our Lord, having entered in within the veil, is pleading in the Holy of Holies the Sacrifice of Himself, is pointing to His *pierced hands and feet*, and His wounded

side, as pleas for mercy and compassion on the sins of men. He is our Advocate with the Father, ever interceding for us, and procuring as the recompense of His all-sufficient Sacrifice the pardon of our sins.

And what He does in Heaven, we do on earth. What He offers in the holy place, we offer in the outer courts. We plead with Him the selfsame Sacrifice, we present the same memorials of His Passion, we unite with Him in pleading the merits of His most precious Blood, the memory of His death. And we are entitled to join in this, which is a sacrificial act, as *priests* to God and the Father.

We must not allow ourselves to be robbed of the grand doctrine of the universal priesthood of all Christians.

Of course, as in the Jewish Church, which was a Church of priests, there are those who are set apart for certain functions, and endowed with certain spiritual gifts for the due performance of those functions, and who

are in an especial sense called to the office and work of priests in the Church of God ; but still in a more general sense all baptized Christians are priests, and therefore qualified to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

Those politicians are most foolish, who in these times strive to make capital by stirring up the laity against the clergy, and representing them as having different interests at heart, by that means propagating the very evil they profess to wish to cure. Just as a herd of sheep will flock together at the appearance of a strange dog in the field where they are grazing, so a body of men, attacked unfairly, as they think, will cling together for self-defence, and finding they have common interests at heart, will form themselves into a clique, and in course of time become separated from the great mass of their fellow men.

We clergy of the Church of England have no desire to be cast out by our fellow Christians, to be condemned to isolation as beings of another class and another sphere.

We wish to be associated with the strong, healthy, vigorous, manly life of our dear country. Her interests are our interests; those all-important questions which affect her future destiny, affect us also. We are Englishmen to the very core, and nothing grieves us more than a slur cast upon our patriotism and loyalty.

While we have the fullest perception of the dignity and the terrible responsibility of our office as priests of the Church of God, we also lay great stress upon the universal priesthood of all true Christians. Nothing would so rejoice us as to see this cardinal doctrine of our faith more generally acted upon. Then there would be no need of those wearisome and perpetual injunctions to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, which we have to utter in public and private. Our flocks would rise to a sense of their true dignity in Christ Jesus; they would as a matter of course adopt a higher standard of spiritual life. The clergy would no longer be considered

to represent the Church, while all the laity were passive lookers-on ; all being recognised as priests, all would be willing to work for Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven would indeed be seen in visible action upon earth. All jealousy between the different orders of workers would then cease, and the Church would be one compact and harmonious whole.

### Our Spiritual Food and Sustenance.

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“My God, and is Thy table spread,  
And doth Thy cup with love o’erflow?  
Thither be all Thy children led,  
And let them all Thy sweetness know.

“Hail, sacred Feast, which Jesus makes,  
Rich banquet of His Flesh and Blood;  
Thrice happy he who here partakes  
That sacred Stream, that heavenly Food.”

Our Catechism teaches the children of the Church to describe the benefits derived from this Holy Sacrament as “the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine.”

As in the old Dispensation God supported and sustained the Children of Israel by

manna from heaven and by refreshing water from the rock, so we too, who are passing through a similar barren wilderness, are strengthened and refreshed by heavenly food.

By partaking of the Elements of Bread and Wine, we have a mysterious communion with Christ, we are made partakers of His Body and Blood, we dwell in Him and He dwelleth in us, we are made sharers of His Divine life.

In accordance with the beautiful law upon which God acts in His dealings with men, He takes two of the commonest products of human society, and makes them channels of inestimable benefit and grace to our souls.

Our Father delights in linking earth to Heaven. He is ever making use of earthly ministries to make us partakers of heavenly realities. He approaches us in nature; His beauteous works are meant not so much to gladden the eye as to instruct the heart. *Our domestic affections, the love and tender-*

ness of our home life, but prepare us for a deeper and truer love, to be revealed hereafter. Sorrows, trials, and troubles come and break our hearts, to leave us at the feet of Jesus, drinking in all the consolations of His grace. Look where we will, we shall see God fashioning, moulding, and sustaining our souls by the means of the poor, unworthy, "beggarly elements" of the world in which we live.

Here, too, He approaches us in His usual way by the intervention of the fruits of the earth.

It does not come within our province, or the scope of our intention, to define in as many words how this mystery is accomplished. The fact only remains, that by partaking of the consecrated Elements of Bread and Wine we are brought into direct contact and communion with our Redeemer. As it is only through Him that we receive pardon and forgiveness of our sins, so is it only by union with Him that we live at all, only as we are participators of His Divine



life, can we be said to be living members of His Church. He Himself has told us, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

And this being so, is it not passing strange that so many professed Christians should banish themselves from the Table of the Lord? Is it not incredible how they should prefer to go out to encounter the manifold temptations of their daily life, trusting to their own strength, and thereby courting a most certain fall?

And whence arises this disinclination on the part of English Churchmen to avail *themselves* of the support and strength that

they would derive from participation in the Holy Communion?

Want of *faith* and want of *knowledge* are the two chief deterrents.

They do not, I fear, sufficiently "discern the Lord's Body," they do not know "the gift of God," and consequently they fail to see the utility, nay, the absolute necessity of frequent communion, if they would attain to any standard of spiritual perfection. Having come, it may be in times past, without careful preparation, without penitent hearts and lively faith, they have not obtained a blessing, and arguing from their past experience, they count it of little moment whether they take the Sacrament or no.

Again, there are many, especially amongst the poor, who rightly regard this Sacrament with great reverence and awe, but yet are prevented from availing themselves of its benefits by a want of knowledge.

How often in the course of our ministry are we met with this excuse, "Oh! I am

not worthy to come ; I am too great a sinner ; I dare not."

As if our feeling our unworthiness should not be a strong impelling power, instead of a restraint.

"Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream ;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him."

It is as sinners we seek the Saviour ; as burdened with a sense of guilt, we come to Him who can relieve us of our burden ; as fainting, drooping souls, we apply to Him, who has said, "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

### The Open Fountain.

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By the general confession of all Christians, of almost every school of thought, when a reprobate sinner is by the grace of God converted and brought to a belief in his Saviour, the precious Blood is applied to his soul, and he is forgiven and pardoned his sin. And what we concede to a mere act of spiritual faith, should we not also most readily attribute to those sacraments which Christ ordained? In the case of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, are we not justified in accepting the article of our Creed to its fullest extent? "I believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins," when we remember the injunction given to St. Paul, *after his conversion*, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and

wash away thy sin." He had been converted, and consequently believed in Christ; but still he had to avail himself of the sacrament which Christ had ordained for the washing away of sin.

And with regard to the Sacrament of Love, in the beautiful Prayer of Humble Access we pray as follows: "Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the Flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood."


If words have any meaning, we here distinctly affirm our belief in the forgiveness and remission of sins, by the application of the Body and Blood of Christ to our souls.

And this most blessed feature of the Holy Communion is too often, as I cannot help thinking, obscured and set aside. I have no wish to underrate any of the other means by which Christ graciously speaks peace to the troubled soul; I have no desire to limit *the power of God* to any one particular

ordinance; but still, to my mind, one of the most beautiful aspects of this divine Sacrament of Love is the pardon of sin which is so freely accorded therein.

Logic and human reasoning, we feel instinctively, are out of place in the consideration of this most glorious truth; we simply fall back upon our experience, and our hearts bear testimony to the reality of what we have been urging.

We have come at times weary and heavy laden, oppressed with a sense of sin and shortcoming; we have cast ourselves upon the infinite love of God, have pleaded the all-atoning Sacrifice for sin, have received with our trembling hands the Bread of Life, have been partakers of the Feast which Jesus made, and have gone back awe-stricken and subdued to our homes. But how different, our cares and anxieties have vanished away, our burdens have been removed, our iniquity has been pardoned, and we have received at the Lord's hands double for all our sins.



Yes, indeed, the Blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin. We fall and fall, time after time, we err and wander like lost sheep, but yet we have but to come and throw ourselves upon His infinite love and compassion, and then we obtain pardon, remission, and perfect forgiveness.

How few realise the sweet life of peace! Our churches are full of doubting and fearing Christians; our onward course is impeded by a multitude of spiritually halt, maimed, and blind; weak brethren, depressed and disconsolate, because they have never fully entered into the possession of perfect rest, which the Saviour so freely accords.

The secret of perfect joy and unbroken peace is a very simple one, but, like all simple things, it is very readily overlooked. It is merely to trust Jesus. So long as we toil away at our own reformation apart from Him, we can reap nothing but disappointment. The stain upon our souls, the *remorse that pervades our being*, remain un-

changed ; no efforts of ours can remove them. But if we have but faith to come to Jesus, and plunge into the fountain He so lovingly keeps open for poor distressed sinners ; if we bathe in His precious Blood, then are we cleansed every whit, and can depart in peace.



### Our Offering.

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THE Latin word *sacramentum* signifies, amongst other meanings, the military oath of allegiance which the Roman soldiers were wont to take on their enlistment; and so it can very well apply to the vow of consecration which the soldiers of the Cross make to their heavenly King and Captain. In the Prayer of Oblation we say: "And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and our bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

Besides, then, the Sacrifice of Calvary, which we plead as a Sacrifice of intercession, and also of praise and thanksgiving, there is also presented unto God the sacrifice of ourselves, our souls, and bodies. We

re-consecrate ourselves to His service, we renew our vows of fidelity, as oft as we draw near to Him in this holy Sacrament.

How it stirs and stimulates soldiers on a long campaign to see their general face to face, to hear his earnest appeals to their patriotism and bravery. Does not a thrill pass through the army, as with one accord they raise up their hands to heaven and vow fidelity to their colours, and to their sacred cause? So, with us, it is a wonderful stimulant to come into the presence of the Captain of our Salvation, to hear and feel the heart-stirring appeals which He makes to us by the story of His Cross and Passion, and to renew our vows of allegiance to His service. Having done our "bounden duty," we go out into the battle of life with more ardour and zeal and self-devotion.

Let it not be said that this solemn re-dedication is unnecessary. The tendency of our times is to great laxity in the religious life. Everywhere we see those who ought to endure *hardness*, surrounding themselves

with luxuries and comforts. The crown of thorns has become changed into a garland of flowers; the Cross is an idle ornament instead of a reproach; the Way of Sorrows has its rough passages smoothed down and its rugged parts levelled; the soldiers of the great King seek to attain their ends and triumph over their enemies, no longer by courage and indomitable resistance, but by compromises, soft speeches, and delicate compliments; the weapons of our warfare are carnal; fidelity and earnestness are condemned as bigotry and intolerance, and a clear definite faith as unenlightenment.

Great need have we soldiers of the Cross to rally round our Captain, to meet together for mutual encouragement and support. The battle has not yet been fought out to its bitter end. We must be on our guard, with sentinels at their posts, and our arms ready for use at a moment's notice, or the enemy will come down upon us, and overwhelm us with sudden destruction.

## The Holy Communion.

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THE work of grace as regards the penitent sinner is twofold. The prodigal son, on his return home, is first of all freely pardoned and forgiven by his father, and then reinstated into his former position; he is clothed with the best robe, presented with a ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet, while the fatted calf is killed in his honour.

God delivers us out of the curse and degradation of sin, and then by the manifold operations of His love sanctifies and elevates our souls, lifting us up into a higher atmosphere, and breathing into us the breath of life, so that from henceforth the life we live savours of heaven and not of earth.

This work of grace is associated in a remarkable manner with the humiliation

and subsequent glory of our dear Lord. We die with Him on the cross, we are buried with Him in baptism, we rise again with Him in the power of His Resurrection, we are made partakers of His divine life.

This is one beautiful aspect of the Sacrament of Love, of which we should by no means lose sight.


We are apt to cast envious thoughts upon God's own people in the days of old, because they had so many manifestations of His power, such demonstrations and assurances of His presence. They witnessed the marvels wrought by His mighty hands and His stretched-out arm, they heard Him thundering from Mount Sinai, they were brought constantly face to face with Him, until this communion with God reached its fullest development in the dearly beloved Son coming to dwell amongst men, frequenting their haunts, conversing with them as friends, sharing their sorrows, partaking of their infirmities, and finally dying in their *very midst*, to give them an example of self-

sacrifice, to which the history of the world could afford no parallel. We sadly think, if only it had been our lot to live in those happy days, how fervent would have been our faith, how devoted our life. But yet, after all, with the exception of His intimate disciples, no men are so highly honoured by the Lord as we Christians of these latter days. Men of other times could only look upon Christ from a distance, we have communion and fellowship with Him of the closest and most intimate kind. We dwell in Him, and He dwells in us. We are made partakers of Him, His being pervades and animates our own.

The life of a true Christian is a supernatural life. While he is in the world he is not of the world; it is impossible to be much in his society without seeing that his thoughts are elsewhere. Other people may be satisfied with earthly things, they may have no other aim or object but to gratify the passing caprice of the moment; his heart is with his treasure in heaven. Men

around him are like children on the sea-shore constructing their castles of sand, to be overthrown by the first daring wave, while he is like the great architect that builds his glorious cathedral as a permanent possession for all ages. Men of the world live for the present, he lives for the future; they work for time, but he for eternity.

Moreover, this new life which he derives from the Son of God exercises a marvellous power over his soul. If we are much in the society of holy and thoughtful men, we insensibly are brought within the range of their influence, and are consequently lifted up out of our ordinary commonplace level both of thought and action; whatever good is dormant within us is awakened into activity by the mere force of the companionship of superior minds; so, when a frail, weak, erring soul is brought through God's grace and mercy into communion with Jesus, it is at once elevated into a loftier region of faith and love, and undergoes a complete *transformation*. As when the rays of the



setting sun fall upon the dark masses of clouds that perchance may be passing over the heavens, they dissipate the gloom, and cause them to glow with the fairest tints and the loveliest hues, so no sooner does the Sun of Righteousness shine upon a sinner's soul, than light usurps the place of darkness, and the beauty of holiness manifests itself.

This divine Sacrament of Love then brings us poor mortals into direct communion and fellowship with Jesus. He only who has experienced this communion knows all that the word implies. He only whose heart has throbbed with a mighty love, whose pulse has bounded under the resistless impulse of a new and vigorous life, can enter fully into the description we have been giving of one of the most striking functions of the Holy Eucharist.

But yet, after all, do we not need to bear in mind the tender warnings given to us in this matter of communion by a spiritual writer? "From the heart, says the gospel, proceed both good and evil; it is from the



heart that the Christian life proceeds, and this is in itself but the reproduction of Jesus Christ in us. But let us not forget that if Jesus Christ comes into our heart, it is not only to hide Himself there, and to annihilate Himself there, it is above all to live there a new life in us; it is to manifest Himself outwardly, and in all our conduct; it is to continue in our actions the perpetual manifestation of His works.

Such was the thought of the Saviour in instituting the Holy Eucharist. He gives us His flesh to eat; but in order that, being filled by it, we may live and act in the world as He did, He sows divine seed in our souls in order that His seed may produce divine fruit in us. He entrusts to us the secret of the King, only on condition that we reveal the works of God. He speaks to our ears, but He requires that what we hear in the ear, we should preach upon the housetops.

This is a doctrine eminently practical, but *unhappily* little understood. People love to

receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion, but they know not how to manifest Him after they have received Him. They hide the sweet and patient Jesus at the bottom of their heart, but they do not let the sweetness and patience of the God whom they possess appear outwardly. They hide within themselves Jesus obedient unto death, but the obedience of Jesus never manifests itself in the fulfilment of their duties. Alas! we act towards the God of the Eucharist as the slothful servant did with his master's talent. The talent lay buried in the ground, and produced neither reward nor virtue."

Each successive communion should mark an onward progress of the soul. As time goes on we should go from strength to strength; our great aim should be to be made conformable to our Lord. And why should it not be so? Everything around us in the world of nature follows a steady course of development until maturity is reached; why should the soul be the only thing in God's universe that makes no on-

ward movement to perfection? We are not to sit down with folded hands, content with a low standard of attainment; as Christian soldiers we should be ambitious of gaining a triumphant victory, of securing an abundant entrance into the city of our inheritance.

As year after year passes, it must see me nearer to my God; as oft as I go into His presence I must be drawn closer to Him. I daresay you have noticed how husband and wife towards the end of life, by reason of their passing through the same trials, and living in such close union one with the other, become very much alike; so should it be with us who are in the habit of seeking communion with Jesus so oft in this Sacrament of His love, we should grow so like Him that strangers may take notice of us that we have been with Jesus. It is not so, alas! with most Christians, who put off their change of heart and soul until they are removed into another world.

### Jesus in the Midst.

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GOD has ever manifested His presence to His people in one shape and form or another. In the old Dispensation we find constant mention of the appearances of God ; talking face to face with Abraham, communing with Moses on the summit of Sinai, guiding and leading the Children of Israel by a pillar of fire and a cloud, manifesting His presence by the glory of the Shechinah and the Urim and Thummim.

In the second Dispensation of the Son, we find Christ revealing in the flesh the glory of the Godhead, and dwelling amongst men for thirty and three years.

And we, who live under the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit, are we not blessed with the presence of God ?

Is there no meaning in our Lord's words? "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

People have a vague, unsatisfactory way of speaking of Christ being present to their souls. They also lay stress upon His being present everywhere as God, and also more especially where two or three are gathered together in His Name.

But admitting all this, do we not want something more definite? Do not our souls crave something more substantial, than a presence which is dependent more or less upon feeling and acts of faith?

This want and craving of ours are supplied by the Sacrament of Love, which is an assurance to us of our Lord's Real Presence.

I believe all bodies of Christians are well-nigh united in affirming that in this ordinance our dear Lord is especially present. They differ only when they come to define the manner of His Presence.

Why cannot we be content to leave this *as one of "the deep things"* of God's Provi-

dence? We are assured of the *reality* of Christ's Presence; why should we search curiously into hidden mysteries? We know absolutely nothing of the laws which regulate the existence of the spiritual body. We are ignorant of the change which passes over the natural body when it rises in newness of life. Why should we try to describe that which baffles all description, to predicate concerning that which cannot be predicated of?

Is not this the source of all the contention and strife which perturb the quiet atmosphere of the Sacrament of Love?

I do not wish to know how or in what manner my dear Lord is present. Sufficient is it for me to know that He is here, as really and as truly, although in a heavenly and spiritual manner, as He was in the midst of His early disciples; in no wise altered, save that His natural Body has given place to His spiritual Body; as full of love, of compassion, and tender mercy as He ever was. And as to that which He

gives to be my spiritual food and sustenance,  
cannot I stay my soul on these lines?

“ Christ was the Word that spake it,  
He took the Bread and brake it,  
And what that Word doth make it,  
That I believe and take it.”

When Christ through His representative takes the Bread and Wine, and places them into my hands, saying, “This is My Body, which is given for thee;” “This is My Blood, which was shed for thee,” I take and receive them in the exact sense in which He meant me to receive them. My only wish is, “Amen, so be it. Be it unto me according unto Thy Word.”

I know not what this world would be to me without this clear, definite assurance that I have of the presence of Him Whom my soul loveth. Banish the sun from the firmament, shut out from view all the soft tenderness of the face of nature, let the colour and form and loveliness of the flowers exist only *as idle dreams*, stop every avenue of the

senses, let no sound break upon the ears, no fragrance give delight to the heart, close one up as in a living prison-house, far from all human sympathy and aid; and even then you cannot picture the desolation of a soul bereft of Jesus.

Yes, He is in our midst, ready as of yore to speak peace to the troubled heart, to comfort the sorrowing, to give the riches of His grace to the poor in spirit, refreshment to those who are hungering and thirsting, pardon to the penitent, and to all, joy and happiness.

Draw nigh unto Him, clasp but the hem of His garment in humble faith, approach but with the sinner's cry for mercy, and, lo! the pierced Hands are stretched out, and, you are folded in the embrace of His everlasting Arms.

And yet how do we receive Him?

Does He not too often wander about this earth without a roof under which He can lay His head? We talk of the ingratitude of Bethlehem, we speak with words of re-



proach of that cold winter's night when there was no room for Him in the inn, we recount with indignation the humiliations to which He was subjected on His first entrance into the world, but do we not condemn ourselves thereby ?

Has He not come knocking for admittance at the door of our hearts, saying, Open, open unto Me ! and have we not replied, " I cannot now, my heart is preoccupied already ; the love of the world, the cares of life, the absorbing interests of my business, have taken possession of my soul ; at a more convenient season I will gladly welcome Thee, but not now ! " The Saviour thus repulsed turns sadly away, for " He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

Look at the visible Church of Christ in these latter days, what a pungent satire it presents upon the practical results of our religion ! the greater part of those who profess to be faithful disciples of the Lord *pass Him by* with contempt and scorn ; they *will not come* unto Him that they may have

life, and go out into the world trusting to their own strength, and then murmur against God because they succumb to the first powerful temptation which the evil one puts in their way. They do but court defeat going out into the field of battle thus defenceless, for their Master has already warned them, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

And is there not another indictment against us? As men for the sake of gain, and for the furtherance of their commercial interests, will go into the fairest and loveliest spot on earth, and there erect their great ugly factories and furnaces emitting smoke and blackness all around, transforming an earthly paradise of ferns and flowers and running streams, into a dreary wilderness of stunted trees, and withered grass, and poisonous smells and unutterable abominations, so those who profess to love God do their very best to mar His gracious work in this divine Sacrament. The serene and peaceful atmosphere which surrounds *the Altar of His Presence* is disturbed by

their harsh wrangling and their bitter disputations; too many draw nigh, not to take the Body of the Lord, but to find grounds of accusation against those holier than themselves; they reverse the order of things, and turn the sweet waters of God's grace into bitterness. Is it not better, however strong our convictions, to seek peace, and to ensue it. Coming into that awful presence as a sinner, with but a sinner's plea for mercy, how can I dare to judge my brother? Let me leave him face to face with his God.

When Jesus was upon the earth in the days of His first coming, He too often found Himself the centre of a contentious crowd; the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Scribes and Lawyers, followed in His wake, not as humble and loving disciples, but as implacable foes, ever watching for some hasty words and unguarded actions which might place Him in their power. When Jesus out of His infinite compassion comes once *more amongst* us, let Him not find that the

hearts of men are still the same, that under different names and altered guise the same unbelievers throng around Him, bringing, by their want of faith and lack of charity, discord and disunion where pure joy alone should reign supreme.

To a true believer, how sweet is the thought of the presence of Jesus! As yet He is veiled from our sight; we worship Him as through a glass darkly; we need the intervention of earthly vessels to enjoy the blessing of sacramental communion with Him: but even with these disadvantages, there is no greater joy to a Christian soul than the opportunity of drawing nigh unto Jesus which the Holy Eucharist affords.

In the world we lose sight of God. The all-engrossing cares and anxieties of daily life, the flippant tone and conversation of modern society, the myriad allurements which beset our path, the general laxity of morals, the scepticism of modern science, all these come between the soul and its God.

In old days the saints had a vivid sense

of the presence of their God; they lived as continually before His eyes, and under His unsleeping observation of their thoughts, words, and actions. It is true that the days had gone by for visible and unmistakable tokens of His presence; no longer had they the pillar of fire by night or the cloud by day, as silent but eloquent testimonies to the care of God for His Church; yet they saw Him clearly by the eye of faith, they recognized His hand in everything that befel them, they acknowledged Him as the upholder of all law, as the motive power in all the works of nature; they recognized His providence in the changeable affairs of men, they betook themselves to His protection in times of need and trouble; in a word, the presence of God was the great fact of their daily lives; they lived, and moved, and had their being in Him.

But now, as we have said, the tendency of modern civilization is to put man in the place of his Maker. Belief in the existence of *God* is treated as one of the harmless

but indefensible delusions of the dark ages; the idea of an over-ruling providence is rejected with scorn, and in its stead is substituted the inexorable, undeviating reign of law. Worship is indeed rendered, but not to the one Being alone worthy of it; intellect, wealth, art, beauty, have their temples and their countless worshippers, while the Giver of all these good gifts is passed by with silent contempt.

What a relief it is to come out of this heathen world into God's sanctuary, there to find oneself face to face with Jesus! there to bow down in lowly adoration before the "King of kings and Lord of lords," Who is there to greet us in the solitude and stillness of the early morning, with all the ministrations of His wondrous love.

Let us recall some of the thoughts which are wont to enter our minds as we kneel in silent meditation in his sanctuary.

How marvellous is His condescension in thus coming to us!

It is the renewal of His humiliation of

Himself at Bethlehem. As then, He voluntarily exiles Himself from His happy home to dwell amongst men. He who is the light and radiance of heaven, He who is the centre of angelic worship, at the prayer and earnest entreaty of sinful men leaves the realms of joy, and comes down once more on His mission of love to a fallen earth.

Nay, more, He comes with even less pomp and majesty than of old. No song of herald angels is heard, proclaiming, with thrilling sweetness, peace on earth, and goodwill towards men. No luminous star comes and stays over the place where Jesus lies cradled in the hearts of His children; no kings from the far East, with gifts of royal magnificence, present themselves amongst the worshippers; He comes as the gentle dew from heaven, as the manna which fell of old around the camp of Israel, silently and imperceptibly.

If He so had chosen, He might have exercised His sovereignty from the land that is *very far off*; He might well have pleaded

His life of suffering and shame, His obedience unto the death of the cross, as a sufficient justification of His absence from this earth; nothing, however, can keep Him back from us. He sees us in trouble; He witnesses us fighting the battle of the faith, at times, it may be, almost overborne by our foes; He marks our yearning, our longing after the Beloved, and unable longer to refrain Himself, like Joseph He casts Himself upon the neck of His brethren, and comes to us with all the resources of His boundless grace. What love can compare to this love of Jesus? The weakest, feeblest, humblest Christian is equally the recipient of His bounty with the most honoured and highly favoured disciple, if he but comes in faith. When we read of a man nursed on the lap of luxury and pride, putting all these things away, and voluntarily going out as a simple messenger of the gospel, into the pent-up courts and narrow alleys of our great industrial towns, we are full of admiration. Our own faith may not prompt us to go



and do likewise, but we cannot withhold our commendation from such a signal example of the power of self-sacrifice. This is at best, however, but a feeble imitation of the self-abandonment of Jesus. He comes out of the pure, tranquil joy of heaven, to a curse-stricken, fallen world. He exchanges the melodies of the happy land for the mournful sighing of creation, as it groans and travails in bonds. He quits the society of the angelic hosts for the company of poor sinful men. He puts aside His glory and submits Himself to the control of His creatures. They may welcome Him or despise Him, as it suits their fancy; they may honour Him with their gifts, or pass Him by with utter contempt, He places Himself entirely at their disposal.

Think too of His love in visiting us in this Sacrament.

There arrives a moment in every spiritual life, when the light of God's truth flashes *in upon the hidden, and unexplored recesses*

of the soul, giving a vision of sin utterly appalling to the slumbering conscience. We see ourselves for the first time as God sees us; we realize the extent of our corruption, the utter frailty of our nature, the unworthy motives which influence our best actions; we note the evil passions which lurk within their hiding places, only waiting for a favourable opportunity to come out and work desolation far and wide.

But, after all, the revelation is but an imperfect one; we look with partial eyes upon our infirmities, we shrink from probing to the very bottom of our evil condition; the little we have seen of our own true selves causes us to draw back shuddering from any further exploration. Think then what must be that marvellous love, which, looking with Divine insight into our fallen and wretched condition, comes seeking to dwell within our unworthy hearts.

There is nothing in us which is not open unto His eyes, but yet He leaves the sweet joys of heaven to take up His abode in

our souls; our sins and shortcomings which should so effectually bar the way against Him, seem rather to constitute the great attraction. He cannot forget, even in the full glory of His risen life, how His mission was of yore to seek out and to save the lost.

As I meditate upon this wondrous love, I must confess I am conquered. Strongly entrenched in my own self-will, I could endure with complacency the threatenings of the law. I could look without emotion upon a life which is so highly exalted as to seem utterly out of my reach; I would admire its grandeur, as Alpine travellers do an inaccessible mountain-peak, and there the matter would end. I could appreciate the beauty of the Christian doctrines, without for one moment thinking it necessary to carry them out into practice in my daily life. But when I am confronted with this love of Jesus, this love which will take no denial, which so abandons itself in the pursuit of its end, which so lavishes itself upon

unworthy objects, which cannot be turned aside from its purpose, but follows the lost sinner everywhere, seeking him at all times and at all seasons, I am shamed out of my cold, languid indifference, and become a willing captive in the train of Jesus, conquered, utterly conquered, by His boundless love.

As I kneel then before the altar my heart is full to overflowing with thoughts of the love of my Saviour. I know that He longs to be near His people, and that therefore He has devised a way by which His visible presence may abide with His Church for evermore. The way in which He executes His purpose I am willing to leave as one of the hidden things of God; sufficient for me is the assurance that He is here in Person, in Body as well as in Spirit, to afford to me all the consolations of His grace.

“O the wonderful condescension of Thy tender mercy towards us, that Thou, O Lord God, the Creator and Giver of life to all

spirits, dost vouchsafe to come unto a poor soul, and with Thy whole deity and humanity abundantly to satisfy its famishing hunger!

“O happy minds and blessed souls, who have the privilege of receiving Thee, their Lord God, with devout affection, and in so receiving Thee are permitted to be full of spiritual joy!

“O how great a Lord do they entertain! how beloved a Guest do they harbour! how delightful a Companion do they receive! how faithful a Friend do they welcome! how lovely and noble a Spouse do they embrace! even Him that is to be loved above all that are beloved, and above all things that can be desired.”\*

And here in that dear presence my pen would fain rest.

My Saviour, precious above all earthly possessions to my soul, Whom I now discern as through a glass darkly, in this divine Sacrament of Love, accept the offering of

\* Thomas à Kempis.

this humble work which I place at Thy feet.

Give to us Thy children the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Enable us to carry out the apostolic injunction, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

In Thy presence let all animosities be stilled, all angry disputations hushed, as, bending in humble adoration before the great mystery of godliness, we say, "It is the Lord!"

THE END.



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